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 RABBI OF TEMPLE EMANU-EL, BEFORE THE EMPIRE
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THE JEW AS A PATRIOT.

An Address Delivered by Rev. Joseph Silverman, D.D., Rabbi of Temple
Emanu-El, Before the Empire State Society, Sons of the
American Revolution, on February 20th, 1906.

The persistent existence of anti-semitism is attested by many evidences that can be gathered from ancient and modern history. It is a matter of great regret that comparatively few voices are raised against it by those who preach love of God and humanity. The horrors of Kishineff and Odessa are sufficiently recent to still cause us to shudder and the reports of impending massacres in Russia give very little hope of a speedy solution of the Jewish question in the domains of the Czar.

The most reprehensible feature of all these persecutions is the unfounded and malicious charge that the Jew regards himself as a stranger in the land where he resides and that he never was and never can be a true patriot. Often has this false accusation been refuted, but it is repeated again and again with unabated viciousness and it requires therefore constant vigilance and earnest rejoinder to preserve the fair name of Israel from the worst forms of pollution.

The fact is that Jews are, by nature and by training, by virtue of their religion, their precepts and practice, exemplary patriots. This statement can be easily substantiated by illustrations drawn from the literature and history of Israel. I can not, however, within the limits of this address make an exhaustive treatment of the subject, but I shall present to you the salient arguments to prove the Jew's claim to a place on the roll of honor of the world's patriots and heroes.

Patriotism is taught with much force and clearness in the Old Testament. The God of Israel is not a tribal God but a universal Deity. He is the creator of Heaven and Earth. The Prophet Malachi says "Have we not all one God? Has not one Father created us all? Why then shall we deal treacherously—one man against his *brother*?" Israel believes in

one God and one humanity. Moses taught "Thou shalt love thy fellow man as thyself." "There shall be one law" said he "for all, for the native and the stranger." "Ye shall have just weights and just balances." Israel was commanded not to vex the stranger, but to treat him as one born in the land—for Israel shall remember that they were strangers in a strange land. The Ten Commandments were given not to Israel alone but to the world. And Moses enjoins Israel to assist the poor and to succor the sick. The Mosaic law did not contemplate exclusiveness but sought to inculcate a love of all the people of the land. To curse God and the King was especially forbidden and was punishable with death (compare Gen. XXII. 28 and 1 Kings XXI. 13). Solomon prays that the Temple of Jerusalem may be a House of Prayer for all people and beseeches God to harken to the petitions of the stranger. During the exile in Babylon the prophet urged the people to seek the welfare of the city whither God banished them and to pray in its behalf. He besought them to serve the Chaldeans and remain in the land (compare Jer. XXIX. 17 and XL. 9). In the second Temple sacrifices were offered twice daily for Caesar and for the people, and, for ages, prayers have been uttered in all synagogues in behalf of the government.

There are several notable biblical examples of the devotion of Jews to non-Jewish Kings. Joseph serves Pharaoh and the Egyptian with unabated fidelity. Mordecai, Esther, many of the prophets, Daniel and his friends, as well as, Ezra and Nehemiah did not swerve from their loyalty to their heathen sovereigns.

Considering the obliquity and persecution to which the Jew has been subjected, it is surprising to find that, in some countries, he is still a patriot. The Rabbinical writers imbued with the spirit of the Scriptures (O. T.) enjoined respect for the law of the land. A few of their sayings are quite significant as teaching their position. "He who rebels against his country deserves death." "Pray for the welfare of the kingdom, for, were it not for that, men would swallow each other alive."

In view of the fact that Israel was so often persecuted we might have expected a different attitude. Judging from the attitude of other oppressed people, we might have expected that the Jew, too, would become indifferent, if not hostile to a country where he suffered untold wrongs and injustice. But the astounding fact will not down, that the Jew is loyal even to the government that persecutes him, so strong is his latent patriotism. And when his country shows him the slightest recognition, grants him some rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, his devotion knows no bounds.

It has been said that every country has the Jews it deserves. I would add that every country where anti-semitism prevails has better Jews than it deserves. Slavery degrades a people; liberty ennobles. Slavery engenders ignorance and superstition; liberty leads to education and enlightenment. But notwithstanding the pernicious influences of persecution, Jews have never lost their individuality and idealism.

Let us, however, dip into history for a few facts. Rome owes the Jews a debt of gratitude for having in the war against Mithridates turned the tide of battle in favor of the Roman arms. Israel has, however, many a bitter recollection of the thrall-drom it suffered at the hands of the Roman government and people. When Naples in the sixth century was besieged by Belisarius the Jews rendered valiant service in saving the town. Bohemia also can attest to the bravery of the Jews who assisted in expelling the brigands that infested her domains. Often in the middle ages have Israelites, serving in the armies of various nations, through their valor, been promoted from the ranks to positions of honor and responsibility, especially in the armies of Portugal, Germany and England. In 1586 it is reported the Hebrews of Prague rushed to the defence of that city and for their meritorious bravery were presented with a banner of distinction by the authorities. In Surinam where there exists a large Jewish community, Jews organized a militia company and on various occasions rendered valuable services to the colony.

In Spain, a country that Jews have no reason to love, they fought as bravely for the government as any of its proudest knights and especially in great numbers (by the thousands) under Alphonso IV. and VIII. Their services must indeed have been remarkable if Alphonso XI of Castile felt impelled to reward their fidelity by setting aside for their use a village called "Aldea de los Judeos." Jews defended Don Pedro against the pretender Don Enrico, claiming that God would not permit that they should deny obedience to their natural lord, Don Pedro or to his rightful successor." Don Enrico, when successful, through the fortunes of war, did not punish those Jews, but praised them for their love and fidelity to the King whom they had so loved and declared that he would himself endeavor to gain their love and esteem.

In Germany where anti-semitism flourishes, especially in the so-called higher circles, Jews have given evidence of an almost unprecedented patriotism. No country owes a greater debt of gratitude to the Jew than the German Empire. In her campaigns of 1813-14, out of a small Jewish population, 263 volunteers and 80 regulars enlisted in the army. In 1815 the Prussian Chancellor felt constrained to acknowledge that "the history of our late war with France records that the Jews have, by

their faithful allegiance to the State, proved worthy of the equal rights conferred upon them. The young men fought bravely by the side of their Christian fellow-citizens and the Jewish women vied with the Christian in various patriotic sacrifices." And yet Jews were at that time treated with contempt, and injustice, being refused permission to serve as teachers or jurors or to practice law (or medicine) until they were baptized. The Jews of Frankfort were subjected to even worse indignities. And it was not until 1869 that the laws of the North German Confederacy gave them some relief from their heavy burdens. Jewish scholars of the German Empire have contributed greatly towards the upbuilding of their art, science, philosophy and literature. And it must not be forgotten that in the Franco-Prussian war, several thousand Jews were enrolled on the side of Prussia. Many fought for France. Some became distinguished on each side and received the Iron Cross or Legion of Honor for feats of courage displayed on the battlefield.

During the wars in the Orient in 1877 and 1878 the Generals Heyman and Lozaroff were honored for distinguished services.

In France the Jews had some protection from Napoleon. Still when he convened the great Sanhedrim of Jewish notables in Paris in July 1806, some of the questions Napoleon asked were, whether French Jews regarded France as their country and Frenchmen as their brethern, and whether they considered the laws of the State binding upon them. Most of the members of the Sanhedrim could not listen to those questions without pain at the thought that their patriotism and their attachment to France should be doubted, notwithstanding the fact that Jews had attested their love of country by shedding their blood on the battlefield. The questions were, however, seriously considered and answered in the affirmative, reference being made to biblical and talmudical law to show that Judaism had always emphasized loyalty to one's country, brotherhood and humanity.

Napoleon had frequent occasions to esteem his Jewish soldiers very highly and two of them, Soult and Mossena, became Marshals of the Empire.

In the Hungarian Revolution more than 35,000 Jews enlisted in the army of Kussuth and bravely fought for the liberty of their country.

The first soldiers who stormed Plevna it is said were Roumanian Jews and the generals on both sides were Jews. Even at this day Roumanian Jews, notwithstanding the bad treatment they receive, flock to their national standards, just as the Russian Jews, despite all persecutions, remain loyal to their government in time of its need.

In Italy 1.4 per cent. of all Jews were found in the army, while only 1.1 per cent. of all other citizens were enlisted. Of the whole Italian army only one in twelve became an officer, while of the Jewish soldier one of every five is an officer.

English Jews are especially noted for their patriotism. The life of King George III. who was shot at, in the Drury Lane Theatre, was saved by a Jew, named Dyte, the grandfather of Dr. Dyte. This occurred not many years after the readmission of Jews into England and was regarded by some as an act of Providence in recognition of the humane conduct accorded the Jews in permitting them again to settle in England. In the Chartist movement in 1848, in the Fenian and Reform riots of 1866-7-8 the Jews were on the side of public order and aided in maintaining the constitution. The English Volunteer Army can boast of having enrolled several thousands of Jewish soldiers, many of whom saw active service in the last Anglo-African war.

Dr. Russel has been quoted as saying in his work on India that Captain da Costa, a Jew, had performed valiant deeds for his government and had died from wounds received in battle. In the British army several hundreds of Jews obtained distinction as officers. Their names can not all be mentioned in this brief address and I, therefore, refer only by name to Major-General Goldsmid, Lieutenant-General Adolphus and Ximines and to Lieutenant Branday and Col. Goldsmid. So much for the patriotism that the Jew has manifested in European countries. It is but a brief sketch and should only be regarded as an introduction into the history of Israel's achievements in Europe. I desire to speak more especially of the patriotism of the Jew in America.

The Jews living here as natives or as immigrants feel an unbounded love for this country. Our attachment for America is not of recent birth. Jews may justly claim to have had a part in the discovery of America.

Some Hebrews advanced money to Ferdinand and Isabella in order to enable them to fit out the vessels for Columbus. At least two Jews, Louis de Torres and Gabriel Sanchez, are said to have accompanied the great discoverer.

Many Jews settled in Brazil where they lived for years until expelled in 1652 when they emigrated to North America and landed in N. Y. where they were granted the right of settlement in 1655. They did not however receive political liberty in New York until 1777. It was also this State that first accorded them religious liberty.

In 1765 opposition to England began to crystalize and at once Jews sided with the colonists and signed the non-importation resolutions. In the colonial army of America there were many co-religionists. As far back

as 1769 a corps of volunteers, consisting chiefly of Hebrews was formed in Charleston, S. C. and fought under Gen. Moultrie.

The most prominent of all the early Jewish patriots in America was Haym Solomon whose fame has not been dimmed by the flight of over a century. He deserves more than a passing notice. He voluntarily rendered valuable services to this country as a secret agent of General Washington; was apprehended, imprisoned, inhumanly treated and was sentenced to military death. His release was however secured and he then devoted himself untiringly to the cause of relieving the financial embarrassment of the Continental Army and Congress, to the extent, it is said, of over \$600,000. His untimely death brought on by his great exertions in those troublous times was not only a great loss to his family but a calamity to the colonists struggling for Liberty. Dr. Jared Sparks, an authority on the data of the American Revolution, has declared that a great part of the success that Robert Morris attained in his financial schemes for the young government of America was due to the skill, ability and patriotic services of Haym Solomon. The noble example of such patriotism was followed by many others, notably by Samuel Lyoh, of N. Y., Isaac Moses, of Philadelphia, Manuel Mordecai Noah of South Carolina. Special mention should also be made of Col. Isaac Frank, who served as aide-de-camp to Washington and Philip Moses Russel who was commended by Washington for his assiduous and faithful attentions to the sick and wounded.

An interesting incident may be quoted to illustrate the spirit of the Hebrew of the revolutionary period. A Mr. Gomez of New York requested of a member of the Continental Congress to procure for him a commission to form a company of soldiers for the army. The friend remonstrated with him on the score of age, claiming that a man of 68 years was too old to go to war. "But," replied Mr. Gomez, highly indignant, "I can stop a bullet as well as a younger man." During the revolution there were many Jewish patriots in the South, as for instance, Mordecai Sheftall, Commissary General in Georgia who defended Savannah. David S. Franks was an aide-de-camp for Arnold, but he did not join the traitor and later testified to the innocence of Mrs. Arnold. He and she were both acquitted and he became U. S. Messenger to Jay and Franklin who were then in Europe. Washington had several Jewish aides-de-camp, notably Col. Isaac Franks and Mayer Moses.

It is impossible to mention all the distinguished Jewish soldiers and civilians of that interesting period of American History.

In all the subsequent wars of our country, in that of 1812, the Mexican war, the Civil war, the Spanish-American war, thousands upon thousands

of Jews fought bravely in defence of their country. Their names can not here be recalled, but they may be learned by referring to Hon. Simon Wolf's book on "The American Jew as a Patriot."

Such is a mere outline of what the patriotic Jew has done in behalf of his particular country and it proves that nowhere are there better soldiers or citizens than Israelites. The Jew is by nature a lover of his country. And his country is not Palestine or Jerusalem as some would have the world believe, but the land where he resides. There is no Jewish nation let it be said again. Jews are only a religious community. We form no nation within the nation. Here in this land Jews are as truly American as any American.

Our patriotism, moreover, is not exhibited only in the army and navy. There are many other spheres of useful labor in which one may prove genuine love of country. The Jew is to be found working loyally and devotedly in all those many fields of activity whether municipal, political, charitable, or otherwise, which go to make up the fabric of public life in our country. The Jews support the great charitable institutions. They see to it that Jewish immigrants and Jewish sick and poor do not become public charges. If a fund is to be raised for the relief of any part of our country, or any other country, Jews contribute their share and often more than their share. They serve in political parties accept public office and appointment on juror's duty and act wherever a citizen is called upon to act. They are found in the legislature, congress and parliaments of the World.

Jews do not act as a unit in political matters, but only as citizens and belong to various parties in accordance with personal preferences. The Jew as such is not a political factor and often frowns down every attempt to utilize a so-called "Jewish vote" in any particular campaign. In fact there is no Jewish vote and no one can truthfully declare that he can deliver it.

We love *our country*. We will labor for its welfare and defend, even with our lives, its integrity and honor.

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